

# Chapter 8C: Land Acquisition in Support of Projects in the Everglades Region

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## INTRODUCTION

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Acquiring land for water resources management is a critical component of the South Florida Water Management District's (District's or SFWMD's) mission and projects for the Everglades Region – the Everglades Construction Project and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). From May 1, 2000 through April 30, 2001, the District's Real Estate Department completed hundreds of transactions to acquire lands to be used for reservoirs and Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) and to improve the region's flood control system, drainage and water supply. Land transactions during the period are summarized in **Table 8C-1** and are discussed below.

Lands totaling over 1,020 acres were acquired for the Water Preserve Areas from May 1, 2000 through April 30, 2001 to serve as a buffer between natural and urban areas, collecting and storing excess water that would otherwise be discharged to tide.

In partnership with Miami-Dade County, the District continued to purchase lands in Model Lands that will be used to maintain the saltwater barrier line, preventing further saltwater intrusion into the South Miami-Dade Region. From May 1, 2000 through April 30, 2001, the District acquired slightly over 127 acres, and Miami-Dade County acquired 581 acres in Model Lands.

The District acquired nearly 375 acres for building Stormwater Treatment Areas from May 1, 2000 through April 30, 2001. STAs are used to remove harmful nutrients in stormwater runoff before the water can enter the Everglades Protection Area. The District has completed STA acquisitions totaling 47,032 acres, almost all the lands required for STA projects. The STAs are discussed further in Chapter 4 of this Report.

On December 6, 2000, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) approved a Record of Decision detailing the Recommended Plan (Alternative 6D) for the 8.5 Square Mile Area and defined the land acquisition boundary for the Federal Project. In the 8.5 Square Mile Area, the District acquired slightly over 45 acres from May 1, 2000 through April 30, 2001, the majority of which is located within the Federal Project boundary. The District will no longer acquire land within the Federal Project boundary; the USACE will assume responsibility for acquiring all remaining land required for the Federal Project. Future land acquisitions by the District in the 8.5 Square Mile Area outside the Federal Project boundary will be made on a strictly voluntary, willing-seller basis, provided funds are available.

Other land acquisitions this year included 20 acres in the Water Conservation Areas, and real estate interests in oil, gas and mineral rights within the STAs.

Several acquisitions made from May 1, 2000 through April 30, 2001 directly address land requirements identified for several projects and project components of the CERP. Acres acquired for the Water Preserve Areas increased District ownership of lands required for the Agricultural Reservoir and Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project and the Bird Drive Recharge, Pennsuco Area, North Lake Belt Storage and Central Lake Belt Storage components. The 374 acres acquired for Stormwater Treatment Areas increased District land holdings suitable for the Acme Basin B component. In addition, the Berry Groves acquisition of over 9,000 acres provided a cornerstone for the C-43 Basin Storage Reservoir Project. CERP Projects are described in Chapter 10 of the 2001 Everglades Consolidated Report and are updated in Chapter 7 of this Report.

Through continued partnerships, with the assistance of federal and local governments and state and federal agencies and in cooperation with the public, the District made significant strides in meeting the land requirements in support of projects in the Everglades Region from May 1, 2000 through April 30, 2001.

**Table 8C-1.** Land Acquisition in Support of Everglades Restoration and Management between May 1, 2000 and April 30, 2001

<b>Geographic Region or Project</b>	<b>Purpose or Comments</b>	<b>Land Area - acres</b>
Water Preserve Areas	Marshes, reservoirs and groundwater recharge areas that abut East Coast Protective Levee	1,023
Model Lands	Recharge area for maintenance of saltwater intrusion	127
Stormwater Treatment Areas	Wetland treatment marshes that will naturally remove nutrients from stormwater runoff	374
8.5 Square Mile Area	East Everglades in low-lying area of Miami-Dade County	45
Southern Glades (C-111)	Part of plan to improve the hydrology of Everglades National Park	--
Everglades Agricultural Area	South of Lake Okeechobee and west of Water Conservation Areas	--
Water Conservation Areas	Part of the original Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project	20
CERP	Other parts of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan	9,018